"Would he want to help us, Mundele?"

"Why not?"

"Is he not exclusively good?" Mbeli continued.

"If he is so good, should he not listen to you, Mbeli?"

"Are not misfortunes caused by the ndoki (spirits), Mundele?"

"But is not Nzambi sufficiently powerful to ward off these ndoki, Mbeli?"

"Are not the ndoki sent against those who have done evil to others? Would Nzambi still be good if he were to ward off the ndoki, who punish the evil-doers? Ye Mundele, no! Nzambi is good, he does only good, why call upon him?"

This bit of conversation sums up the native's conception of the supreme being. One calls upon him to explain what one cannot understand, but there is no cult devoted to him. Everything that is good for the society and whose source or origin is not known comes from him.

Aside from this spirit, the various tribes believe that there is a multitude of other spirits, some stronger than others, who are all very much concerned with the natives. They are all good in the sense that what is obtained from them is always beneficial to someone, although sometimes it is quite harmful to someone else. For this reason the native has created nkisi [Ed., fetish] and nduki.

The fetisher is supposed to be able to communicate with these spirits. He keeps from them, according to native belief, the secrets of which plants help in healing and who has killed someone. He can obtain from them the punishment of a thief, because such punishment is beneficial to the one robbed. Through their intervention he can assure good fishing, guarantee rich hunting, facilitate childbirth, heal the sick, etc., or, on the other hand, make any enterprise fail.

The native believes that success of any kind is granted by these spirits. He attempts, therefore, to secure their good graces as much as possible. Before hunting, fishing, childbirth, etc., he goes to the fetisher. For a fairly high fee, the latter calls upon the spirits and hands over the appropriate nkisi. If the results do not conform to his expectations, the native blames [21] neither the fetisher nor the nkisi, but a nduki more powerful than the nkisi invoked. [Ed., a passage is omitted here.]

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The intervention of the nkisi or ndoki is only a temporary one. Once an undertaking has been successfully carried out, the native has no further use for the object given to him by the fetisher to insure success. On the next occasion he will go back to the fetisher and ask for a new nkisi, which he would always like to be more powerful than the ndoki. Unfortunately the fetisher cannot find such an all-powerful nkisi. A spirit that he has invoked with success for years, whose power seems inexhaustible,

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Fig. 15. Implements of Diapolo, Basakata Fetisher of the Bokoro Region.

will one day fail him. Five, ten, fifteen times success has followed the invocation, and then, there it is, an enterprise under the same auspices fails miserably. A new nkisi, more powerful, has become ndoki, and the native returns to the fetisher and demands that he do better, always better! With the exception of certain figurines carved in wood and used as hunting fetishes, the physical representation of nkisi consists of an assortment of the

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778 of the most disparate and incongruous objects, [22] white, black, or red clay, ngula /Ed., redwood powder/, chicken feet, heads, beaks, claws, and feathers, shells, palm nuts, etc., all mixed together in a large pot or in an old worn basket. It is from this magic treasure that the fetisher takes a pinch or two which he wraps carefully in a little bag and hands over to those who resort T
[778] to him. As for the human figurines so often found in the huts of the Bateke and Banfumu, we do not believe that they are fetishes. In our opinion, they are guardian figurines for children, carved before their birth and preserved until they reach marriageable age.

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791 Some fetishers manage to gain quite a reputation, and their
824 services are purchased for a very high fee. They are familiar with the properties of certain plants, and they keep this knowledge secret and exploit it as much as possible. It would be wrong to believe that the fetisher's practices are all based on mystification.

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278 Ebandia, the high chief of the Mosengere, knew the secret of
695 certain poisons. He knew effective remedies for certain kinds of festering wounds; he proportioned the quantity of poison at ordeals so as to make its action violent or slow, and he was familiar with an antidote which cancelled out the effects of the poison.

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278 A few hours before our arrival at Penge, Ebandia had sub-
695 jected [23] one of his wives to trial by poison, on the mere sus-
684 picion that she might have gone too far with a native during a slightly prolonged stay in the forest. Ebandia accused her of adultery, prepared the beverage, and compelled the poor woman to prove her innocence by taking the poison. The unfortunate creature rebelled. A quarrel arose, and the village natives, when informed of the matter, protested against it, to no avail, however. The old tyrant carried out the ordeal. He had been notified of our impending arrival, and after allowing the unfortunate woman to suffer horribly for nearly two hours, he gave her the antidote. Five hours later, all the effects of the poison were gone. [Ed., the text is not translated from the last paragraph, page 23, to the second paragraph, page 26.]

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764 [26] In general the natives have a kind of cult of the dead. In the Bateke-Banfumu region, the corpse is wrapped in fabrics. The more important the deceased person is, the larger the bundle. His whole wealth in fabrics goes with him to the grave. Prior

S 224 778 of false bamboo, two or three arrowheads, and a small bow had been stuck in this paste. At the foot of the stake the natives had piled a whole series of antelope and buffalo skulls. These remains alone were vaguely reminiscent of the hunting fetish of the Kasai region.

M S 224 778 It is possible that this very simple form of the nkisi of the hunt is also the earliest and that it is closest to ancestral custom, since the primitive shelters of the neighboring peoples and the huts characteristic of the Bateke-Banfumu tribes are actually a mere elaboration of the custom followed by the parental branch of these peoples, a custom which called for the skull of the largest animal killed during the hunt to be dedicated to the guardian spirits of the hunt and to be placed at the foot of the physical representation of these spirits.

M 224 778 In the region of Oshwe and Bumbuli we found no trace of this custom. Each village, however, possessed its hunting fetish. The one in the Yaelima village of Yanga is among the most interesting. A tall shrub stands near a group of four huts located slightly apart from the principal area of the settlement. Two forked stakes, 1.20 meters apart, stand close by, and a straight stick lies on the ground, which may be placed on the forks. A small piece of a calabash hangs by two lianas, one of which is tied to the tree, the other to one of the forked stakes. The calabash contains substances with magic power: a mixture of mpembe and black earth, forming a muddy paste. Before leaving on a communal hunt, each hunter who owns a net must walk by this fetish. The head of one of his arrows or of his spear is dipped in the small calabash, and part of the mud that sticks to it [81] is spread on the nets. Upon returning from the hunt, a piece of flesh from one of the animals killed is hung on the crossbar lying on the two forked stakes. The custom of depositing skulls does not seem to be known in the region.

The hunting fetish of the Bokala in the village of Yoshomo Monene stands in the center of the native settlement. It consists of two forked stakes which may be joined by a crossbar, exactly like the framework of the Yaelima hunting fetish. The tall shrub is replaced by an herbaceous plant with thick leaves. The calabash containing the magic substances lies on the ground between the

Yaelima

224 plant and one of the stakes. The customs and ceremonies observed
778 before leaving for the communal hunt are identical to those we have just described.

224 As to the relations between the fetisher, the hunting fetish, and the individual hunter, we will ignore them, having been unable to obtain any information on this subject in these regions.

Throughout the region we visited, large-scale hunting is done communally. As a rule, all the men participate, including young men from the age of 15. [Ed., the text is not translated from the last paragraph, page 81, to the second paragraph, page 83.]

[83] The catch of the communal hunt is shared among all the families in the village, with the chief and the dignitaries having special rights.

224 Individual hunting
622 does not entail any distribution, except when a buffalo, leopard, or elephant is involved. [293] The tail of the buffalo goes to the native chief who uses it as a fly-chaser and a badge of rank. [281] The skin of the leopard is reserved for the chief, who makes it into a skirt which he displays ostentatiously at important festivities and public dances. The trunk and tusks of the elephant go to the chief while the bristles go in [778]

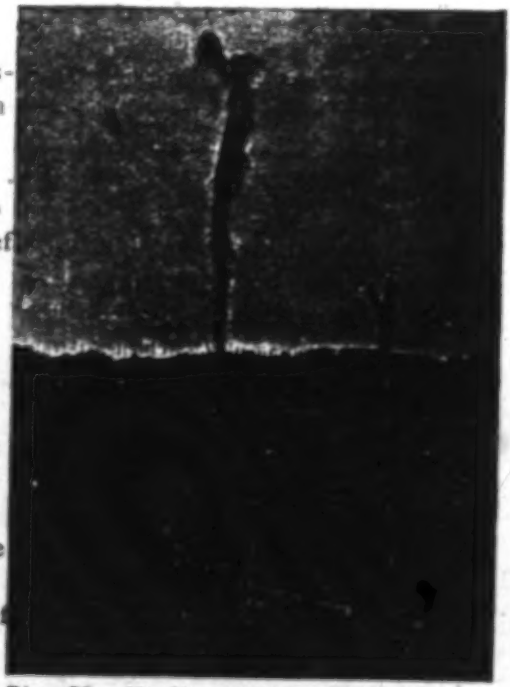

Fig. 51. Yaelima Fetish, Nkisi of the Hunt.

part to the hunters and [84] in part to the local dignitaries, who [361] use them to make necklaces.

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Fig. 87. Pipe for Smoking Hemp, Adorned with Nkisi.
Left: rear view. Right: front view.

M 301 on all the fingers of the hand. Those who can afford it even put them on their toes. Around the neck they wear fiber necklaces, M [778] from which they hang nkisi bags and horns. These amulet necklaces are associated with a religious idea, with magic power, rather than with ornamentation.

M 301 Children are usually overloaded with gaudy ornaments: white 854 feathers stuck in the hair, necklaces and belts of glass beads, and small bells attached to the belt. In our opinion, however, these objects are not primarily intended to adorn the child, but to protect

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Fig. 106. Natali, Banfumu Chief of Kapanda.

it. There is no doubt that the mother sticks the feathers in her child's hair and attaches small bells to his belt in order to find him more easily if he gets lost in the fields or in the bush. As soon as the child is old enough to find his own way and return to the vil- M lage alone, bells and feathers are given up permanently. [185] 301

According to their ornaments, the peoples of the Stanley 171 Pool-Kole region are divided into five groups.

845 [202] The event is announced by the usual signal, but the signal is doubled or, if the children are of different sexes, the signal for each sex is given once. It is followed by the dance beat: two [535] or three long and two short.

The next day the father's relatives go outside the village, 845 preferably to a crossroads. On each side they plant a stalk of 778 lokókólókó. All around the stalk they spread a little heap of small branches and various leaves called jŭké. It is a sign and a place of benediction and good fortune. Each passer-by stops, picks two leaves, places one on each pile, spits on it, and says swá.(2) Then

2. Onomatopoeia for "spit."

they clap hands and twice sing out, yelí yeye. Such behavior brings the benediction of the twins upon a person's journey, his undertakings, his marriage. The umbilical cord as well as the placenta and membrane are buried under the heap.

845 Every morning the mother and father draw two stripes with 302 kaolin on the middle of their foreheads and on their arms, above [386] and below the elbow. They do the same to the twins. (3) They

3. Sometimes a double stripe is added at the temples The kaolin may be used pure or mixed with the red paint called ngóla.

continue doing so until the child is weaned. If after that time one of the children falls ill, they begin again treating him in this manner until he is cured, taking care not to omit his brother, lest he too fall ill. For while these designs are signs of joy, they are [751] above all a prophylactic measure against children's fever (ikútswáki), [502] called wăsanyi when it occurs in twins or in a child following them, and manifests itself chiefly by tumors of the head and face.

845 Twins are invariably called Mbóyó and Bokétu, names 551 given to the first born and the second respectively, whatever their sex. The Bombwanja (like the Ekonda) use the names Mbóó and Mpia, respectively. The mother takes the name of Ámbá.

845 parents to the dance, they must go. When the mother passes a
●[778] crossroads or the dwelling place of a spirit or an efeno (a place where the Nkundó gather for magical practices, oracles, etc.), she also sings and dances in honor of the spirit, so that he will favor her
845 children. Various songs are popular, such as: Elím'é'Ámbá
533 tongólela yelí yeye, "Spirit of Ámbá, do not weep; (1) Bokétu la

1. Tongólela is an archaic form still in use among the Ekonda, etc

Mbóy'é'Ambá tofúkáké tonyongáké, toléké bilingoi yelí yeye, "Ámbá's Bokétu and Mbóyó, do not bruise yourself, do not stir, do not eat bilingoi mushrooms"; Bokétu 'a Mbóyó njóátela ngóy' emengo yelí yeye, "Bokétu and Mbóyó, I surround my mother with abundance"; Bokétu'a Mbóyó lá'okono lá'okendo yelí yeye, "I shall fall ill, and yet I will walk (be well)"; Bokétu'a Mbóyó, lióta bokekesano yelí yeye, "difficult childbirth," etc.

Foods forbidden to twins are the mushrooms called bilingoi
845 (or bilingondo or bankánkíndá), the mpambí antelope, and the ðlí
262 yam, which is also forbidden to parents whose child is not yet weaned. (2)

2. This prohibition extends to all food cooked in pots in which such forbidden foods have been prepared. The extension is characteristic of all alimentary prohibitions.

845 When traveling, the parents of twins gird themselves with the
484 creeping plant called boyayenga, or wear it like a strap over the shoulder. The mother also attaches a bell to it. Their hair is often
[301] adorned with two feathers from the tail of a gray parrot (nkoso) and two feathers from a white hen. [504]

845 The greeting to parents of twins and their reply must always
576 be double: w'ónó w'ónó, the reply em'óné em'óné; oðyá, oðyá, the reply bíka bíka. Note that the last greeting is not replied to differently